

Consensus Position on 520

Oppose Current “A” Options: We oppose the “A” design options proposed by the State to replace the Westside SR 520 corridor. The “A” options will degrade our regional transit and transportation system, damage the environment in and around the Arboretum, and negatively impact the neighborhoods near the project for many years to come.

Dedicate New Capacity to Transit: We can’t just build our way out of congestion. New highway capacity reduces traffic in the short term, but it leads to more congestion down the road. We need to be smart about our investments and make sure that they are looking to the future. That means building a transportation system incorporating clean, efficient transit instead of continuing to rely on more and more auto capacity. We believe 520 should be 6 lanes with the 2 new lanes exclusively dedicated from the start to bus rapid transit and light rail. Financing for high capacity transit should be integrated from the beginning. Design should incorporate a one-stop multi modal station on the Westside and should reduce the impact on the Arboretum by reducing the traffic using Lake Washington Boulevard to go to and from SR520

This approach will better accommodate future growth and give people alternatives to being stuck in traffic. Bus rapid transit or light rail across 520 can be extended to employment centers to the east and Ballard to the west. That’s a strong foundation for the next 100 years. It will also demonstrate that we are finally willing and able to make the tough choices necessary to back up the 70 percent reduction in carbon emissions that Seattle, King County and the State have committed to achieve by 2050.

Reduce Footprint of West Side Landing: The size and design of the “A” options have an unacceptable impact on the Arboretum and surrounding neighborhoods because it is being designed to accommodate two more lanes of cars. We believe that by dedicating these two new lanes of capacity to transit, we will be able to significantly reduce the footprint of the west end landing and narrow the roadway across the Arboretum, which will alleviate many of the existing problems. We recognize and accept that the light rail connection on the west side will also have an impact. But we believe it will be far less intrusive than the current plan. We also recognize there are technical issues that must be addressed with the light rail alignment on both the east and west sides. We believe that these issues are solvable.

Reduce Height and Impact of the Planned Floating Bridge: The proposed pontoons and bridge superstructure would be 30 feet high -- as tall as a three story building. It looks nothing like the current 520 and I-90 floating bridges. This design will create a massive viaduct all the way across Lake Washington. We recognize that a raised deck above the bridge pontoons has

certain advantages for maintenance, but it does not have to be as high as presently designed to achieve these advantages. We recognize the pontoons must be replaced as quickly as possible to address safety concerns, but the size of the pontoons and the bridge superstructure can and must be significantly reduced.

Respect the Arboretum and Corridor Communities: Highways don't often mix well with dense, livable neighborhoods. Here, we also have the Arboretum, a regional jewel. The current plan would bring more noise and traffic to the Arboretum when the goal should be to reduce the impact on the Arboretum and minimize the traffic using Lake Washington Boulevard to go to and from SR520. The Portage Bay viaduct would be widened to 7 lanes. A massive interchange would be built in Montlake. This is all a mistake. The west side should follow the principles of context sensitive design to minimize the impacts on the Arboretum and neighborhoods. The key is to integrate a functional 520 transportation corridor with priority on transit mobility into the fabric of vibrant, urban neighborhoods and open space.

Pursue Context-Sensitive Design: The State has not listened to 520 corridor neighborhoods, nor have they adequately involved the City of Seattle. To rectify this, the City will define in detail the positions articulated above. The Mayor, with the Seattle Department of Transportation, and working with the City Council, will lead a conversation with Sound Transit, Metro Transit, corridor neighborhoods and others to develop an acceptable Westside solution. The NEPA decision-making process will drive the ultimate design. It's time to debate this project on its merits. We believe an open conversation will lead to a much better result, one supported by a majority of Seattle and Eastside residents.